

Teachable Moments Guide

Shine the Light On Child Safety

The small flashlights throughout this book indicate an important safety situation or choice faced by our main characters. Duracell® and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC) encourage you to use the guide below as a simple tool to help start a conversation with your child about safety. We hope that you will engage your children by asking questions and giving “real-life” examples that relate back to the scene.



Just Say NO! and Walk Away - Pages 4 and 8

Teachable Moment: Sofia Squirrel firmly says “No!” when Ken Kangaroo asks her to go get cotton candy with him; the children say “No!” when Harold Hound Dog asks them to help him win a prize for his daughter.

- Children need to understand that adults who are not in charge of them should never ask them to go anywhere or try to buy them candy, gifts or other treats.
- While this can be difficult for children because they may be turning down something they really like, it is important for them to feel empowered to say “no” and walk away without fear of hurting feelings or needing to be polite.
- Reinforce that it is always important to tell you or another adult they trust if a similar situation occurs.

Conversation Starters

1. Do you think Sofia did the right thing in this situation? Why?
2. What do you think Sofia should do now that she’s told the Kangaroo “no”?
3. Should Sofia worry that she hurt the Kangaroo’s feelings?



Tell a Trusted Adult - Pages 5 and 9

Teachable Moment: The children tell Mr. Ernie that Ken Kangaroo offered to buy Sofia cotton candy; the children tell Sheriff Gina that Harold Hound Dog approached them.

- More often than not, children are hurt, abused or abducted by an adult known to the child or the family. Teach your children that even if the person who makes them feel uncomfortable, offers to buy them something or asks them to keep a secret is someone they know, it’s still very important for them to tell you or another trusted adult.
- This is also a good time to help your children identify two other trusted adults they can go to if they feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused, such as teachers, grandparents, or other relatives. It is important for children to know that they are not alone; there are many trusted adults in their lives who will help protect them.
- We know that children love and need to be commended for doing the right thing. This is a great opportunity to reassure your children that they can talk to you about anything without being afraid that you will be angry.
- Just like Sofia and her friends, you want your children to feel safe talking to you.

Conversation Starters

1. Why do you think it is important for the children to tell Mr. Ernie and Gina the Giraffe what happened?
2. Do you feel comfortable telling me if another person, even someone we know, makes you feel scared, uncomfortable or confused?
3. Do you think you should keep any secrets if someone asks you not to tell?



Always Take a Friend - Page 6

Teachable Moment: The children go with each other to get snacks.

- This is one of the most important safety lessons of this book because often children like to show their independence by wanting to go places alone or ahead of their parents or guardians. However, children who are alone are more at risk than those accompanied by others.
- As parents and guardians, you may recall doing many things on your own at your child's age so you might want them to mark the same milestones. But you must remind your children that they should have a friend with them at all times—even when playing in the yard.

Conversation Starters

1. Do you understand why you should never go places without a friend or trusted adult?
2. Do you think you need to have someone else with you to play in the backyard?



Adults Should Not Ask Children For Help - Page 9

Teachable Moment: Sheriff Gina explains to the children why they did the right thing in telling Harold Hound Dog “No!” and walking away.

- One of the wonderful things about children is that they want to help and please others. That is why you should teach them that if an adult asks them for help they do not need to be polite and that you want them to say “No!” and get away from that person.
- This lesson should be reinforced because abductors may try to trick a child by asking for help finding a lost puppy or child, with directions or carrying something to their home or car.
- Remind your children that adults should ask another adult for help—never a child.

Conversation Starters

1. Do you think adults should ask children for help?
2. Is it okay to help someone if I've given permission to you?
3. Practice out loud how to say “No!” in a loud, firm tone.



Always Check First - Page 10

Teachable Moment: The children want to leave Mr. Ernie to go on the rollercoaster.

- The important message here is that your children should understand they are not to leave you or their guardian without permission first.
- It is essential that you or another trusted adult know where they are and where they plan to go at all times—even if they are just going outside to play in the yard.
- Again, reinforce that they should always ask for your permission and take a friend.

Conversation Starters

1. Do you understand that you need to stay with a friend or an adult you trust when you are playing?
2. Why do you think it is important for me to know exactly where you are going to be?



Recapping the Lessons - Page 17

Teachable Moment: Celebration of teamwork and lessons well-learned.

- This is a great opportunity for you to reinforce the safety messages in the book and praise your children for learning them.

Conversation Starters

1. Do you think Petey, Tom and Sofia did a good job learning about safety at the fair?
2. What did they learn?

“Real-Life” Scenarios

1. What would you do if someone asked you to get in his or her car?

- No matter how your children reply, in a calm voice, tell them that they are not allowed to leave with anyone, even if it's someone they know, unless you are with them or they check first with you or another trusted adult.
- Remind your children that you will never ask someone to pick them up from school or the playground unless you have discussed it with them first.

2. If you are playing outside with your friend <INSERT FRIEND'S NAME> and you decide that you want to go to his or her own backyard and play instead, what should you do first?

- Be firm in setting the rule that your children need to check first before going to someone else's house to play—even if it is nearby.

3. If you were playing on the playground at school and someone you do not know asked you to help find his or her missing puppy, what would you do?

- It is important to reinforce here that they should firmly say “No,” get away and tell a trusted adult.
- Children should feel confident in saying “No” if a situation makes them uncomfortable, and they should know that they never have to be polite in an uncomfortable situation, even with someone they know.

Tip For Parents

Praise your children whenever you notice that they are practicing one of these safety lessons. Explain to them that you are very proud that they are learning to make safer choices.

This type of positive reinforcement empowers children with the confidence they might need if they encounter an unsafe situation.

